



*Expanding Our **REACH** to Restaurants*

Technical Assistance Manual



Diabetes is a serious and growing problem in the US and the world. In King County, diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death. African Americans, Asians Americans & Pacific Islanders, and Latinos/Hispanics are disproportionately affected by diabetes. We realize that this is due to many factors. Our health is not only a result of our actions but of the opportunities that are available to us and access to resources to support us.

The mission of the REACH Coalition is to eliminate diabetes-related disparities among African Americans, Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders, and Latinos/Hispanics living in King County. Coalition members collaboratively developed a training program to disseminate its culturally tailored diabetes education and self-management curricula (REACH Model) at appropriate community sites and venues in King County. Under the REACH US initiative, Coalition partners provide training and technical assistance to clinics, faith-based organizations, and community-based agencies on the REACH Model. In addition to training and dissemination of the REACH Model, the Coalition is working to promote primary prevention and organizational systems changes that support and sustain its efforts to eliminate diabetes disparities.

The *Expanding Our REACH to Restaurants* Technical Assistance Manual is another way to provide community agencies in King County with information on how to work with local restaurants to raise awareness about diabetes, modify menus, and increase access to healthy foods.

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How to use the *Expanding Our REACH to Restaurants* Technical Assistance Manual

This technical assistance manual was developed to assist community agencies working with African Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Latinos to engage local restaurants in partnerships to increase healthy menu options. In order for the *Expanding Our REACH to Restaurants* program to be successful, the community agency and the restaurant management and staff must be ready and able to devote a significant amount of time to this project. We have found that time spent up-front in discussion, education, and planning will ensure that both the agency and restaurant have a successful and sustainable experience.

This technical assistance manual provides checklists and recommendations for both the community agency and the restaurant to complete. Together they will assess their readiness and ability to evaluate current menus and form a partnership to develop healthful alternatives that meet the needs of the restaurants' clientele and the restaurant itself. These materials will help each partner identify areas of strength that will increase the likelihood of success and will identify gaps or weaknesses that should be addressed before proceeding with the program. "No" answers do not necessarily preclude a partnership, but should be addressed before proceeding.



STEP ONE: Assessing the Community Agency's Capacity to Participate

The criteria below represent the minimum components of a successful outreach program. The agency should consider the following prior to beginning the process of recruiting restaurants, providing education, and assisting restaurants to make menu changes:

Community Agency Criteria	Yes	No	Explanation/Comments
Has your agency identified potential restaurant partner(s) who serve the priority population?			
Does your agency have an existing relationship with the restaurant(s) identified?			
Does your agency have staff time and resources to provide ongoing support to the participating restaurant?			
Does your agency have nutrition expertise on staff or a relationship with a nutrition professional to provide advice and support to participating restaurants?			
Is your agency familiar with the culture and language of the participating restaurant and its clientele? This includes food preferences and cultural foods.			
Do you have staff who speak and/or write the appropriate language, if needed?			
Does your agency have translation capability, if needed?			



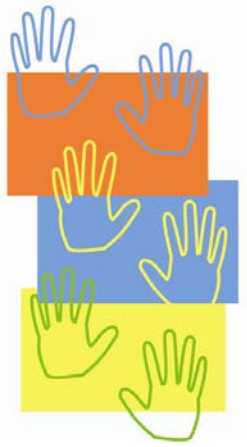
STEP TWO: Outreach to Restaurants

Restaurants are motivated to participate in healthy restaurant initiatives for a variety of reasons. Two of the main reasons are:

1. Desire for publicity and increased profit;
2. Desire to help the community.

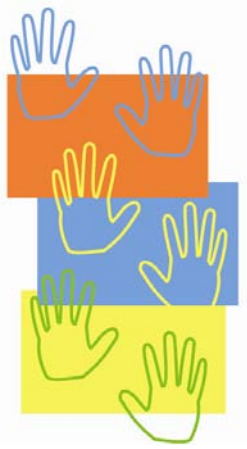
Understanding what motivates restaurant owners/managers to participate in the program is one of the keys to effective outreach. Owners/managers motivated by a hope for increased publicity and profit will likely want to know about incentives and the easiest way for them to participate. Owners/managers motivated by the desire to improve the health of the community may already have ideas about how to change their current menu. Both will likely want support from the supporting agency in making changes. When preparing to work with restaurants, keep the following tips in mind:

1. **Understand that restaurants need to make a profit.** Restaurant owners and/or managers may have altruistic motivations to help the community, but at the end of the day they need to make a profit. Be aware and accommodating of the restaurant owner/managers' concerns. For example, a restaurant may be afraid of advertising an item as "healthy" for fear of scaring off customers. Instead of highlighting a menu item's health, owners may prefer to call an item "flavorful," "in season" "fresh" or "innovative."
2. **Meet with restaurant owners at their convenience.** Ask restaurant owners how they'd like to be contacted: in-person, by mail, email, or phone and be prepared to meet an owner at their restaurant during a time of day when business is slow.
3. **Provide education.** Restaurants want to serve meals that are healthy as well as good-tasting to their clientele. Educating owners and staff about what it takes to prepare healthier options may be needed. If your organization does not have staff who have expertise in nutrition and meal preparation, you will want to ask for assistance from a nutrition professional.



STEP TWO: Continued

4. **Be flexible.** Owners and managers may have certain constraints about what they can change on a menu. Work with them to identify areas that will improve the health of the menu even if they do not want to make large-scale changes. Small changes in ingredients, condiments, portion sizes, or other options can add up to overall healthier menu options.
5. **Work with existing groups.** Working through organizations such as the state or local restaurant associations or the state or local chamber of commerce can increase the program's visibility in the restaurant community.



Outreach Checklist: Identify Restaurants to work with

Outreach Checklist:

- ☐ Contact existing state or local groups (restaurant association, chamber of commerce, etc.) to garner support and suggestions for potential participating restaurants.
- ☐ Contact potential restaurants by mail and other means. (See Appendix A: Invitation to Participate).
- ☐ Schedule follow-up meetings with interested restaurants to discuss their participation.
- ☐ Find out which restaurants your priority population patronizes most often.

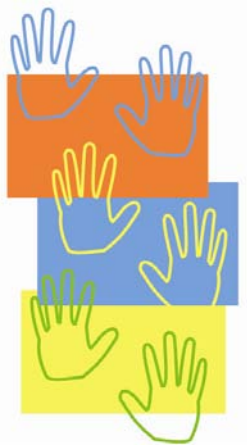
Notes:



STEP THREE: Assessing Restaurant's Ability to Participate

The criteria below represent some of the essential components that will help ensure a good “fit” between the community agency and the restaurant(s). The following criteria can help assess a restaurant's ability to participate:

Participating Restaurant Criteria	Yes	No	Explanation/Comments
Does the restaurant serve the agency's priority population? What documentation or evidence does the restaurant have to support this?			
Does the restaurant already offer some healthy options?			
Is there internal support for menu changes at the participating restaurant? Will all necessary staff implement program during all shifts?			
Will the restaurant be able to continue the program fairly independently after the initial changes are made?			
Does the restaurant have a means of evaluating the menu changes through tracking orders or sales? Do they need assistance developing a system?			
What type of staff training does the restaurant need to prepare staff for changes to the menu?			



STEP FOUR: Preparing Restaurants for Participation

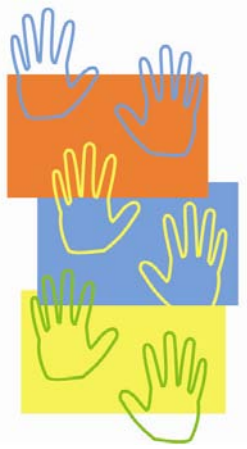
Once a restaurant has agreed to participate, they will need to decide at what level. The following is a list of ways that a restaurant can choose to participate in a healthy menu program:

- ☐ Highlight existing options on menu that are “healthy options”
- ☐ Create a new healthy entrée or side dish
- ☐ Offer substitutions or side dishes that are identified as “lighter” options
- ☐ Discount smaller portions
- ☐ Discount healthier options for limited time periods or days of the week
- ☐ Provide nutrition and/or health educational materials in the restaurant

Be open to innovation. If restaurants have new or creative ideas help assess the ideas' feasibility and support implementation if appropriate.

After the restaurant identifies their level of participation, the organization should identify what types of support they can offer the restaurant. Possible support items might include:

1. Providing nutritional assessment of current menu items with suggestions for substitutions and/or improvement.
2. Helping create an insert menu of healthy options.
3. Providing nutrition, diabetes, or other chronic disease education for restaurant staff and customers.
4. Creating and analyzing surveys of customers' food preferences and needs.
5. Providing resources for low-cost or free culturally appropriate educational materials in appropriate languages



STEP FIVE: Developing a Work Plan

Once the organization and the participating restaurant agree on their tasks, list them in the following table. Include the specific staff person who will be responsible for each item.

Tasks for the Partner Organization	Person Responsible/ Timeline
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

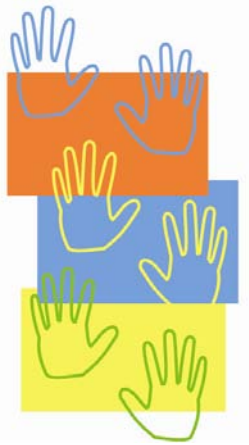
Tasks for the Restaurant	Person Responsible
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.



STEP SIX: Publicizing Menu Changes and Offering Incentives

Publicity for participating restaurants is one of the incentives for participating in a healthy menu options program. It not only lets potential customers know where they can find healthy choices, but publicity is likely the main reason restaurants agree to participate. The following are ideas on how to help the program and participating restaurants gain publicity:

- **Issue a press release.** Getting a story in a local newspaper or radio station about the *Expanding Our REACH to Restaurants* program is the best way to get free publicity for both the restaurant and your organization's work. When you write your press release, don't forget to include your angle – the more you can explain why your program is new and distinctive, how it solves prevalent problems, or relates to a current trend, the more likely you are to be published. Including a personal story that readers can relate to is a good way to garner interest.
- **Pitch a story.** Whether you are pitching a story to the local paper or writing an article for your organization's website or blog, make it interesting and fun. A similar program in Somerville, MA ran stories in the local paper entitled "Where's Joe?" that showed pictures of the Mayor eating at different participating restaurants.
- **Publish the names of participating restaurants.** You can include the list of participating restaurants on your website, organizational partners' brochures and/or websites, and anywhere else you can think of! This is a great low-cost way to get the word out about the program and who's participating.
- **Offer incentives.** A healthy restaurant program in Tacoma, WA was able to partner with the YMCA to offer free day passes to children who ordered a healthy item off the menu. This is a great incentive because it promotes health, encourages customers to order healthy items, and can increase patronage at the restaurant.



STEP SEVEN: Follow-Up and Evaluations

The community agency and the participating restaurant should schedule time for debriefing and evaluation 3 to 6 months after the initiation of menu changes. Use this checklist to guide discussion:

	Yes	No	Explanation/Comments
Have the healthy menu changes been successful from the restaurant's point of view?			
Have the healthy menu changes been successful from the agency's point of view?			
Has the participating restaurant received adequate support from the community agency? If not, what else needs to be done?			
Does the restaurant want to continue working with the agency?			
Has the restaurant been able to evaluate the impact of menu changes? What were the results?			
Are there other restaurants that might be interested in participating in the program?			

Additional training or support needed:

Additional materials needed:

Appendix A:
Invitation to Participate

Community Agency Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Month, Day Year

Restaurant Owner/Manager Name
Restaurant Name
Restaurant Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear (Restaurant Owner Name),

[Community Agency name] invites you to participate in the *Expanding Our REACH to Restaurants* healthy menu initiative. This program aims to assist restaurants with improving the healthfulness of current menus or highlighting healthy menu options already served through education and outreach.

As Americans, including Americans living with diabetes, dine out more and more often, we see restaurants as key players in the fight against chronic disease. We strive to work together with restaurants to make the healthy choice not only the easy choice, but also the most delicious choice!

We offer a variety of ways for you and your restaurant to participate. You can participate in one of the following ways, or all of them:

- ☐ Highlight existing options on menu that are already “healthy options”
- ☐ Create a new healthy entrée (or entrées)
- ☐ Offer lighter substitutions
- ☐ Discount smaller portions
- ☐ Discount healthier options for limited time periods or days of the week
- ☐ Provide educational materials in your restaurant

By participating in Expanding Our REACH to restaurants healthy menu initiative, your restaurant will receive advertising through list places the restaurant will be advertised here. [Could include list of participating restaurants and/or news stories about the program with the letter.]

We hope you decide to participate and we will be contacting you soon to schedule a time to talk about this initiative.

Sincerely,

[Community Agency/Contact Person/Phone Number/Email Address]

**Seattle & King County REACH (Racial and Ethnic Approaches to
Community Health)**

(206) 263-8192

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/chronic/reach.aspx>